

88-63

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Council edges toward Laguna policy

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For three and a half hours Monday night, the Sebastopol City Council wrestled with the two most controversial elements in the report from the city's Laguna Advisory Committee, ultimately taking tentative steps toward adopting both, pending some more specific information about which properties would be affected, and how the policy would be implemented.

Council member Gwen Anderson arrived with a two-page position statement which provided the framework for the series of motions she made to wrap up the extended discussion, which featured informal input from many former members of the Laguna Committee and several of the area residents who attended the special meeting at the Sebastopol Veterans building.

The first of the three motions

directed city staff members to prepare a "parcel specific" map detailing which properties along the Laguna and within Sebastopol's sphere of influence could be considered natural or undeveloped. It is those lands to which a new environmental preservation policy will be applied, the council said, but parcels which have been filled, developed, or are no longer in their natural state will be excluded.

"I don't know what's preservable and where that line is," said councilman Howard Reeser in support of the map request. Colleague Bill Roventini agreed, "It's too delicate an issue to paint with a broad brush."

Most of the area that will be covered by the intended council policy lies close to the Laguna's main channel, from the Community Center south past Fannen Avenue, when it widens to include wetlands meadows extending more broadly from the channel west. The map with the specifics will be back before the council at their next meeting, Monday, June 6.

The issue of no-net-fill proved even

THE PAPER May 26-

JUNE 3, 1988

NEWS

THE WES

LAGUNA FROM FRONT PAGE

more difficult to pin down. While the concept seemed generally agreeable to the council members, the details of implementing it proved troublesome. Even though Laguna Advisory Committee member Suzanne Nelson explained that this idea had been incorporated in their report "specifically to allow Morris Street to be developed," the council struggled to reconcile the proposed new requirement with the already established assessment district along Morris Street which financed the street widening and other infrastructure improvements that were completed last year.

Bill Roventini in particular was reluctant to impose the obligations of a no-net-fill policy on the properties in that district. "Our credibility is challenged," he told his colleagues. Dennis Key, who is in the process of developing one of the cur-